

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 T-03 IO-12 OMB-01 SY-07 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

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FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2086

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL TANGIER

C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 0253

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MO

SUBJECT: SECURITY FORCE ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN MOROCCO

1. SUMMARY: CONGEN OFFICER TRAVELED BY CAR THROUGH HIGH ATLAS AND SOUTHERN MOROCCO MARCH 15 THROUGH 18. HE PASSED NUMEROUS ROADBLOCKS, OBSERVED UNUSUAL GENDARMERIE AND MAKHZEN MOBILE ACTIVITY AND WAS DENIED ACCESS TO CERTAIN AREAS. END SUMMARY.

2. FSO REX HIMES DROVE ON PREVIOUSLY PLANNED TRIP FROM CASABLANCA TO OUARZAZATE, KSAR ES- SOUK, MIDELT, KASBA TADLA AND RETURN CASABLANCA MARCH 15 THROUGH 18. HIMES WAS WAVED THROUGH SIXTEEN ROAD CHECKPOINTS SOUTH OF ATLAS MOUNTAINS AND OBSERVED MOVEMENT OF NUMEROUS TRUCKS CARRYING SECURITY FORCES IN AREA BETWEEN OUARZAZATE AND KSAR ES- SOUK.

3. ON MARCH 16 AT BOUMALNE, NORTHEAST OF OUARZAZATE, HIMES AND TRAVELING COMPANIONS WERE PREVENTED BY GENDARMERIE FROM VISITIN DADES GORGES, WELL- KNOWN TOURIST SITE. ONE GENDARME EXPLAINED RESTRICTION BY SAYING " THERE' S NO POINT IN YOUR GETTING SHOT."

4. ALSO ON MARCH 16, HIMES VISITED TODRA GORGES NEAR
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TINERHIR. ACCESS ROAD HAD SECURITY FORCES ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS STATIONED IN PAIRS EVERY QUARTER MILE OR SO. SEVERAL TRUCKLOADS ARMED SECURITY FORCES WERE OBSERVED HEADING NORTH TOWARDS GORGES WHILE TRUCKLOADS CIVILIANS ACCOMPANIED BY ARMED SOLDIERS OR GENDARMES HEADING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION. FOUR TRUCKLOADS GENDARMES WERE PARKED IN GORGE AREA, WHERE HIMES MET CAPTAIN KHETTOUCH, CHIEF, GENDARMERIE SOUTHERN MOROCCO (A PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE) ACCOMPANIED BY CAID OF OUARZAZATE. BOTH WERE DRESSED IN FATIGUES. KHETTOUCH TOLD HIMES TROOPS WERE SIMPLY ON MANEUVERS.

5. IN TOWN OF TINERHIR EVENING OF 16 TH FIVE OR SIX TRUCKLOADS OF SECURITY FORCES WERE OBSERVED AS WELL AS MILITARY HELICOPTER LANDING IN MARKET AREA.

6. ON MARCH 17 HIMES PASSED THROUGH GOULMIMA, ACCORDING GOM SITE OF ONE OF MARCH 3 INCIDENTS, BUT NO UNUSUAL ACTIVITY WAS OBSERVED. AT KSAR ES- SOUK RELIABLE AMERICAN SOURCE SAID THAT HELICOPTERS HAD IN RECENT DAYS BROUGHT IN WOUNDED TO HOSPITAL THERE, ONLY ONE IN REGION.

7. NEXT DAY AT MIDELET DAUGHTER OF LOCAL GENDARMERIE OFFICIAL TOLD HIMES THAT GENDARMES WERE STILL SEARCHING FOR SOME OF PERPETRATORS OF MOULAY BOUAZZA ATTACK WHO HAD FLED INTO AND ACROSS HIGH ATLAS. SHE SAID THERE HAD BEEN CLASHES IN AREA OF IMILCHIL AND DJEBEL AYACHI, WHERE " SEVERAL " REBELS HAD BEEN KILLED. SEVERAL TRUCKLOADS SECURITY FORCES WERE OBSERVED IN MIDELET.

8. NO UNUSUAL ACTIVITY OBSERVED BETWEEN MIDELET AND KASBA TADLA.

9. COMMENT: IT WAS NOT APPARENT WHETHER GOM SECURITY FORCES HAD SPECIFIC INFORMATION RE WHEREABOUTS INSURGENTS OR WHETHER THEY SIMPLY COMBING AREA. PRESENCE REGIONAL GENDARMERIE OFFICIAL AND TROOPS NEAR TINERHIR INDICATE GOM CONCENTRATING A MAJOR PART OF SEARCH IN THAT AREA. ALTHOUGH TOTAL NUMBER OF TROOPS OBSERVED ON TRIP NOT GREAT (ONLY A FEW HUNDRED), IT APPEARS THAT SOME INSURGENTS, WHOEVER THEY ARE, ARE STILL ON LOOSE, SOMEWHERE IN RUGGED HIGH ATLAS.
NELSON

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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